

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-10

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P R 181246Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5798

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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USDOC/CAGNE FOR TENNEY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, KU

SUBJ: AMERICAN EXPO-KUWAIT, 1976

REF: A) STATE 170462; B) KUWAIT 3276; C) STATE 153689

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS DISCUSSED SUBJECT OF GOK APPROVAL FOR BOTH SUBJECT AND PATENTS INTERNATIONAL OVERSEAS CORP. (PIOC) TRADE EXHIBITIONS WITH MOHAMMED RAJBANI, ACTING CHIEF OF GOK MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (MCI), DEPT. OF TRADE FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS. (DEPT. DIRECTOR, BADER ABDUL RAHIM, WILL RETURN FROM VACATION AROUND AUG. 1.) THIS DISCUSSION GENERALLY CONFIRMS SABAWI STATEMENT (REF B) ON LACK OF GOK APPROVAL FOR PIOC. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF WAS SHOWN MCI'S REGISTRATION BOOK FOR TRADE FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS. SABAH AND SABAWI CO. REQUEST FOR AMERICAN EXPO-KUWAIT TRADE FAIR, TO BEGIN NOV. 20, WAS NOTED THERE-

IN AS APPROVED MARCH 20. REQUEST FROM LOCAL SPONSOR OF PIOC, ABDUL AZIZ OTAIBI (IN PARTNERSHIP WITH AL-AYOUB CO.) FOR AN "EXHIBITION OF MIDDLE EAST TECHNOLOGY" SUBMITTED
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EARLY MAY. MCI

REQUESTED IN LETTER DATED MAY 20
FURTHER CLARIFICATION ON THREE POINTS (DETAILED BELOW).
SINCE RESPONSE TO THIS LETTER HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED, GOK
APPROVAL OF TRADE EXHIBITION STILL PENDING.

3. MCI REQUIRED FOLLOWING FROM PIOC:

(A) TRUE REGISTRATION OF COMPANY. RAJBANI NOTED THAT IN
ITS CORRESPONDENCE, PIOC IS CLAIMING TO BE BRITISH CO.
HOWEVER, MCI HAS BEEN RECEIVING INFORMATION REQUESTS FROM
FRENCH, NETHERLANDS, U.S. AND UK EMBASSIES HERE INDICATING
THAT FIRM IS FRENCH, DUTCH, ETC. CONCERN AS WELL. SINCE
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN DATA IS ONE OF MCI REQUIREMENTS, MCI
DESIRES FURTHER CLARIFICATION ON THIS.

(B) BOYCOTT PROBLEMS OF PARTICIPATING FIRMS. MCI HAS ASKED
FOR LIST OF COMPANIES THAT WILL PARTICIPATE IN PIOC EXHIBI-
TION, SO THAT IT CAN BE CHECKED AGAINST ISRAEL BOYCOTT LIST
(MR. RAJBANI INFORMS US THAT SABAH AND SABAWI SUBMITTED
SIMILAR LIST).

(C) BOYCOTT PROBLEMS OF PIOC ITSELF. RAJBANI HAS RECEIVED
LETTER FROM GOK MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS, ISRAEL BOYCOTT
OFFICE (DATED FEB. 1976) STATING THAT KUWAIT CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY HAS RECEIVED COMPLAINTS FROM UNSPECI-
FIED SOURCES THAT PIOC WAS "ZIONIST" COMPANY. MCI HAS
ASKED PIOC TO CLARIFY THIS AS WELL.

4. WHILE SABAWI ASSERTION THAT PIOC DOES NOT HAVE GOK
APPROVAL IS CONFIRMED, EMBASSY IS UNABLE TO DETERMINE
WHETHER APPROVAL WILL EVENTUALLY BE GRANTED. SABAWI CLAIM
THAT GOK HAS SOUNTRTY QUOTA FOR TRADE FAIRS (REF B, PARA 3)
NOT RPT NOT CONFIRMED. MR. RAJBANI STATED THAT THAT HE WAS
UNAWARE OF ANY FORMAL DIRECTIVE IN THIS REGARD, BUT ACK-
NOWLEDGED AT SAME TIME THAT THIS WAS POLICY QUESTION
WHICH COULD BE DECIDED ONLY AT HIGHER LEVELS BEGINNING
WITH DEPT. DIRECTOR ABDUL RAHIM. IN ANY CASE, PIOC CLARIFI-
CATION OF POINTS RAISED IN MCI LETTER IS INDISPENSABLE FOR GOK

APPROVAL.

5. RE REF A, PARA 2, EMBASSY HAS NOT RECEIVED "OFFICIAL"
NOTIFICATION THAT PIOC FAIR HAS NOT BEEN APPROVED. EMBASSY
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SENT DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO GOK MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
WEEK OF JULY 10. IT IS UNKNOWN WHEN GOK WILL RESPOND,
BUT EMBASSY SUSPECTS THAT IT WILL NOT BE UNTIL AFTER MR.
ABDUL RAHIM RETURNS ON AUGUST 1. FROM EMBOFF DISCUSSIONS
WITH MR. RAJBANI, HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT PIOC HAS NOT
OBTAINED APPROVAL AS OF NOW.

6. COMMENT: ABDUL AZIZ OTAIBI, PIOC SPONSOR, IS ALSO

SECRETARY TO GOK COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. SHEIKH SHAMLAN
AL-SABAH, KUWAITI PARTNER IN SABAH AND SABAWI CO. IS MEMBER
OF ROYAL FAMILY AND HIGH OFFICIAL IN GOK INTERNAL SECURITY
ESTABLISHMENT. WHETHER PIOC WILL OBTAIN APPROVAL IS THUS
LESS QUESTION OF FORMAL REGULATIONS AND MORE MATTER OF
RELATIVE POLITICAL CLOUT EACH SIDE IS ABLE TO EXERT.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY HAS NO OBJECTION TO COMMERCE/
CAGNE BRIEFING INQUIRING BUSINESSMEN THAT PIOC HAS NOT YET
OBTAINED APPROVAL, DRAWING ON EMBASSY CONVERSATION REPORTED
ABOVE. COMMERCE SHOULD MAKE CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT
ULTIMATE STATUS OF FAIR NOT YET DETERMINED.
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